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Title : Need to set up Cashew Board in Kerala.

SHRIMATI C.S. SUJATHA (MAVELIKARA): Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to an important issue. Sir, cashew industry in Kerala plays a very important role in the State's economy as well as having a significant contribution to the Forex earnings of the nation. This industry is primarily located in the three districts of Kerala, that is, Quilon, Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram. More than three lakh workers are engaged in the processing of cashew. Approximately 98 per cent of the total workforce is women who come from the BPL families.

The present production of cashew in the State is only one lakh tonne whereas the requirement is about five lakh tonnes. The requirement gap is bridged by imports. The import of cashew has to continue for providing employment to the poor workers at least 200 days in a year till the indigenous production increased to the required level. But severe financial constraint is posing a serious threat to the future of this industry, and hence the Centre should provide financial assistance to the tune of Rs.200 crore urgently to tide over the present crisis.

The Centre should take urgent measures to set up a Cashew Development Board which should be centred in Kerala to promote the production of cashew and development of this industry in the State. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: What about your Hindi[m22]?